

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SAN JO 02124 01 OF 02 160530Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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O 150345Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7371
WHITE HOUSE IMMEDIATE
USIA IMMEDIATE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 SAN JOSE 2124

EXDIS

STATE FOR ARA. WHITE HOUSE FOR MARY HOYT. USIA FOR ILA

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: OVIP (CARTER, ROSALYNN)
SUBJECT: ANALYSIS OF MEDIA SITUATION IN COSTA RICA

REF: STATE 104923

1. SUMMARY: COSTA RICA'S PRINT AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA ARE FREE, ENERGETIC, PROGRESSIVE, PERVASIVE, AND INFLUENTIAL WITH THE WHOLE OF COSTA RICAN SOCIETY. THE MOST INFLUENTIAL NEWS ORGANS TAKE A HIGHLY FAVORABLE VIEW OF THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION AND CAN BE EXPECTED TO REPORT FULLY AND ACCURATELY THE DETAILS OF MRS. CARTER'S VISIT.

2. PRESS:

COSTA RICA'S PRESS ANTECEDENTS DATE BACK TO THE 1830S, AND THE HISTORY OF THE GROWTH OF A FREE PRESS IS A SOURCE OF CONSIDERABLE NATIONAL PRIDE. COSTA RICA TODAY HAS FIVE DAILY SPANISH LANGUAGE NEWSPAPERS (THREE MORNING AND TWO EVENING), A SMATTERING OF WEEKLIES, AND TWO WEEKLY ENGLISH LANGUAGE NEWSPAPERS.

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PAGE 02 SAN JO 02124 01 OF 02 160530Z

A). THE DAILY MORNING PAPERS ARE: 1) LA NACION, FOUNDED IN 1946, IS THE MOST INFLUENTIAL PAPER AND HAS THE LARGEST CIRCULATION (90,000-100,000). IT IS POLITICALLY INDEPENDENT BUT AT PRESENT IS CONSIDERED BASICALLY IN OPPOSITION TO THE ODUBER ADMINISTRATION AND THE RULING PLN. 2) EXCELSIOR, FOUNDED IN 1974, IS THE PRESENT VOICE OF THE ODUBER GOVERNMENT. THE

NEWSPAPER BEGAN WITH SUBSTANTIAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM

ROBERT VESCO, CHanneLED THROUGH EX-PRESIDENT PEPE FIGUERES. IT BOASTS THE MOST MODERNLY-EQUIPPED PLANT, BUT CONTINUALLY FIGHTS FOR FINANCIAL SOLVENCY. 3) LA REPUBLIC, FOUNDED IN 1950, IS THE THIRD LARGEST NEWSPAPER AND CLEARLY REPRESENTS THE OPPOSITION VOICE TO THE PLN.

ALL THREE MORNING DAILIES HAVE EDITORIALIZED FREQUENTLY AND FAVORABLY ON THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION.

B) THE TWO AFTERNOON NEWSPAPERS ARE: 1) LA PRENSA LIBRE AND 2) LA HORA, A SUBSIDIARY OF EXCELSIOR. BOTH ARE SOMEWHAT SENSATIONALIST IN THEIR COVERAGE; NEITHER HAS A LARGE CIRCULATION.

C) THE TWO ENGLISH LANGUAGE PAPERS ARE: 1) THE SAN JOSE NEWS (BIWEEKLY) AND 2) THE TICO TIMES (WEEKLY). BOTH PAPERS HAVE AMERICAN PUBLISHERS AND ARE WIDELY READ AMONG THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING COMMUNITY, BUT HAVE LITTLE INFLUENCE UPON COSTA RICAN ATTITUDES OR THINKING.

D) COSTA RICA ALSO HAS TWO FAR-LEFT WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS, THE COMMUNIST PARTY ORGAN LIBERTAD AND THE MARXIST PUEBLO. BOTH PAPERS CONSISTENTLY CARRY ANTI-AMERICAN COPY AND PORTRAY THE U.S. IN TRADITIONAL "CAPITALIST-IMPERIALIST" TERMS. BOTH CAN BE EXPECTED TO FEATURE ANTI-U.S. MATERIAL DURING THE PERIOD OF MRS. CARTER'S VISIT AND TO REPORT THE VISIT IN NEGATIVE TERMS.

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PAGE 03 SAN JO 02124 01 OF 02 160530Z

3. T.V.

COSTA RICA HAS FOUR COLOR TELEVISION STATIONS. THE TWO LARGEST, MOST MODERN, AND INFLUENTIAL STATIONS, CHANNELS 6 AND 7, CAN BE EXPECTED TO GIVE EXTENSIVE COVERAGE TO THE VISIT. ALL STATIONS WILL USE USIS SAN JOSE'S VTR COVERAGE.

4. RADIO

COSTA RICA HAS 43 MEDIUM WAVE, 7 SHORT WAVE, AND 45 FM RADIO STATIONS. THE MAJOR STATIONS WITH NATIONWIDE COVERAGE AND WHOSE NEWS SHOWS HAVE MOST INFLUENCE ARE RADIO MONUMENTAL, RADIO COLUMBIA, AND RADIO REJOJ. ALL RADIO STATIONS ARE EXPECTED TO REPORT ON THE VISIT AND SOME WILL COVER IT IN DETAIL.

5. MEDIA LEADERSHIP

BIO SKETCHES ON COUNTRY'S KEY NEWS MEDIA LEADERS HAVE BEEN

PROVIDED TO ADVANCE PARTY AND WILL BE AVAILABLE TO MRS.
CARTER'S PARTY ON ARRIVAL.

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PAGE 01 SAN JO 02124 02 OF 02 161346Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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6. WHAT ATTITUDES WILL MRS. CARTER ENCOUNTER?

A) THE MOST INFLUENTIAL NEWS ORGANS IN COSTA RICA TAKE A
HIGHLY FAVORABLE VIEW OF THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION AND WILL
ACCORD MRS. CARTER AN OPEN, FRIENDLY, AND WARM RECEPTION.
BECAUSE COSTA RICA BY AND LARGE IS "CARTER COUNTRY" QUESTIONS
DESIGNED TO EMBARRASS MRS. CARTER WOULD NOT BE EXPECTED.
HOWEVER, BECAUSE OF THE FREE AND VIGOROUS MEDIA TRADITION HERE,
SOME FRANK AND CHALLENGING QUESTIONS MAY BE EXPECTED. SOME
JOURNALISTS MAY ALSO LOOK FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO ASK MRS. CARTER
WHETHER SPERGFIC BENEFITS WILL FLOW TO COSTA RICA AS A RESULT
OF HER VISIT (E.G., WILL THE U.S.G. NOW ACCEPT A HIGHER VOLUME
OF COSTA RICAN BEEF EXPORTS).

B) THE LOCAL MEDIA CAN BE EXPECTED TO PROVIDE FULL, BROAD
COVERAGE OF THE VISIT. AS MANY AS FIFTY REPORTERS, PHOTOGRAPHERS,
AND T.V. PERSONNEL CAN BE EXPECTED TO COVER MRS. CARTER'S ARRIVAL
DEPARTURE, PRESS CONFERENCE, AND ALL PROGRAM ACTIVITIES.
IN THIS CONNECTION IT MUST BE BORNE IN MIND THAT INDIVIDUAL REPS
OF LOCAL MEDIA MIGHT WELL TAKE A NEGATIVE VIEW OF THE VISIT IF
THEY ARE ACCORDED LESS ACCESS TO MRS. CARTER THAN U.S. MEDIA REPS.

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PAGE 02 SAN JO 02124 02 OF 02 161346Z

7. WHAT TOPICS SHOULD BE TOUCHED ON?

A) POST HAS SUBMITTED PROPOSED ARRIVAL STATEMENT AND REMARKS FOR PROGRAM EVENTS CONTAINING SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS FOR THOSE OCCASIONS.

B) IN HER PRESS CONFERENCE, MRS. CARTER SHOULD COMMENT ON THE

OPENNESS OF COSTA RICAN SOCIETY, COSTA RICA'S DEMOCRATIC TRADITIONS, INSTITUTIONS, AND VALUES, AND THE FACT THAT U.S. AND COSTA RICA SHARE COMMON VALUES AND TRADITIONS. IN THIS CONNECTION MRS. CARTER COULD APPROPRIATELY MENTION COSTA RICA'S ADVANCED EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND HIGH LITERACY RATE, COSTA RICA'S UNIQUE ELECTORAL MACHINERY, AND COSTA RICA'S FREE PRESS.

C) MRS. CARTER SHOULD ALSO HIGHLIGHT AND REITERATE THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S POLICY ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND EMPHASIZE COSTA RICA'S LEADERSHIP ROLE IN THE ADVOCACY OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN INTERNATIONAL FORA; I.E., THE 1965 COSTA RICAN PROPOSAL TO FORM A U.N. HIGH COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS. IF APPROPRIATELY COVERED IN THE TALKS AND COMMUNIQUE, MRS. CARTER MIGHT MENTION PROJECTED U.S.- COSTA RICAN COOPERATION AT THE UNGA THIS YEAR IN ADVANCING THAT PROPOSAL.

D) SINCE PRESS QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE PANAMA CANAL NEGOTIATIONS CAN BE EXPECTED, MRS. CARTER SHOULD REITERATE THE U.S. POSITION AND OBJECTIVES IN THE CANAL NEGOTIATIONS AND EXPRESS U.S. APPRECIATION OF COSTA RICAN FRANK ADVICE AND WISE COUNSEL WITH RESPECT TO THIS PROBLEM.

E) IN PRESS CONFERENCE MRS. CARTER SHOULD ALSO BE PREPARED TO EXPAND ON POINTS COVERED IN JOINT COMMUNIQUE. THIS WILL BE SUBJECT OF SEPARATE MESSAGE.

8. WHAT TOPICS SHOULD BE TOTALLY AVOIDED?

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PAGE 03 SAN JO 02124 02 OF 02 161346Z

A). MRS CARTER SHOULD AVOID ANY DISCUSSION OF VESCO CASE. IF QUESTIONS RE VESCO ARE RAISED, SHE SHOULD SIMPLY STATE THAT SHE PREFERS NOT TO COMMENT.

B) MRS. CARTER SHOULD AVOID RESPONDING TO ANY QUESTIONS RE NEW REPUBLIC OR ARTICLES IN APRIL 16 AND 23 ISSUES OF THAT PERIODICAL. THESE WERE BASED ON INTERVIEWS WITH FORMER PRESIDENT JOSE FIGUERES IN WHICH HE REPORTEDLY STATED THAT VESCO MONEY

FINANCED PRESIDENT ODUBER'S 1974 CAMPAIGN AND EXPRESSED HIS SUPPORT OF PAST CIA ACTIVITIES IN COSTA RICA AND ELSEWHERE. PUBLICATION OF THESE STATEMENTS HAS CREATED A SERIOUS POLITICAL CONTROVERSY IN COSTA RICA.

9. WHAT SETS COSTA RICA APART FROM OTHER COUNTRIES TO BE VISITED?

EXCEPT FOR COLOMBIA AND JAMAICA, AND TO A LESSER EXTENT VENEZUELA, COSTA RICA IS THE ONLY PRACTICING DEMOCRACY. COSTA RICA HAS A ROBUST PRIVATE ENTERPRISE SYSTEM, UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE, A COMPREHENSIVE HIGH-QUALITY PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM, A HIGH LITERACY RATE, AND A FREE PRESS. IT IS A REMARKABLY OPEN SOCIETY WITH AN ADVANCED SOCIAL WELFARE SYSTEM, A LARGE MIDDLE CLASS (AND A RELATIVELY EVEN DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH), AND AN INTERNATIONAL PRESTIGE AND INFLUENCE WAY OUT OF PROPORTION TO ITS SIZE AND POWER. COSTA RICA HAS NO ARMED FORCES AND RELIES TOTALLY ON THE RIO TREATY FOR DEFENSE AGAINST EXTERNAL THREAT. KILDAY

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